

## TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

M A R Y L A N D S T A T E B O A R D

OF

M O T I O N P I C T U R E C E N S O R S

1941 - 1942

GEORGE R. MITCHELL

Chairman

ANNIE E. ELLIOTT

Vice Chairman and Treasurer

MARIE WHITE PRESSTMAN

Secretary

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HELEN L. ODOM

Chief Clerk

Offices

848 North Howard Street

Baltimore, Maryland

HON. HERBERT R. O'CONOR,  
GOVERNOR OF MARYLAND,  
STATE HOUSE,  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Sir:

We have the honor to present to you the Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors, pursuant to the provisions of Section 9, Chapter 390, of the Acts of 1922.

The Motion Picture Board of the State makes the following report of its work for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1941, and ending September 30, 1942.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT

During the fiscal year two thousand two hundred nine (2,209) motion picture films were reviewed, comprising five hundred sixty-seven (567) feature films, (six of which were rejected "in toto") the balance being shorts, cartoons, newsreels, juke box films, and miscellaneous subjects. There were four hundred fifty-one (451) eliminations made on statutory grounds in two hundred seventeen (217) prints. The six pictures rejected (in toto) were as follows:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
BLESSED EVENT	Clover Theatre
FOOLS OF DESIRE	Continental Pictures, Inc.
HORRORS OF WAR	Maple Attractions
HOW TO UNDRESS IN FRONT OF YOUR HUSBAND	Hollywood Producers and Distributing Company
SOCIAL DISEASES IN MEN	Clover Theatre
VENEREAL DISEASES	Standard Film Service

Because of war conditions the total number of foreign subjects reviewed by the Maryland Board was reduced from 74 subjects the previous year to 46 viewed the year just ended. These pictures are numerically listed as follows:

24 British	7 Polish	10 Russian
4 French		1 Yiddish

In the censorship of foreign language films, the Foreign Language Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Board, has been of invaluable assistance. The Foreign Language Committee is composed of more than twenty persons who are outstanding in the State of Maryland for their knowledge of the language and customs of foreign countries, and are able to give a high grade of intelligent advice in the Board's work of censoring foreign language films. The Board wishes to give expression to its gratitude for this assistance for those who serve do so without compensation.

## WORK OF THE BOARD

Four hundred fifty-one (451) eliminations of scenes and dialogue were made in the pictures reviewed. The eliminations ordered by the Board were made on statutory grounds. The foregoing statement of the past year, showing the number of eliminations and the number of rejected pictures, by no means adequately covers this phase of our work. During the course of the year many conferences were held with applicants for licensing and, wherever possible, constructive suggestions were made for the revision of pictures in order to avoid conflict with the Maryland Statute. This work is important to the producing companies, to the exhibitors and to the public, and cannot be fairly measured by any statistical record. Frequently the Board's suggestions have resulted in the revision of the picture by the applicant or the producing companies. Nor are the number of deletions shown in this fiscal year's record a true measure of the protection which the public received from the Board, for, unquestionably, the producing companies (both the Hays' organization and the Independents) have become so familiar with the State motion picture laws and regulations, and with our procedure in administering the same, that many scenes and dialogues, which are known to be offensive, under our statute, are eliminated before submission for review.

The Board requires all dialogue to be submitted at the time the application for license is made to the Board. This rule rigidly enforced has been found most advantageous, especially in its relationship to foreign films.

All of the review work is carried on daily at the Board's offices, 848 North Howard Street, in Baltimore. The two projectionists employed by the Board are constantly on duty and, as a rule, each film that is presented is reviewed by two members of the Board. Pictures containing controversial matters are rescreened several times before all members of the Board, and after careful study action is taken, either licensing the picture as presented, or directing that eliminations be made, or rejecting the picture "in toto." The applicant then receives notice of the action of the Board and where eliminations are made or a rejection is ordered, statutory reasons for such action are given in writing. In the event the applicant is dissatisfied he (or his representative) may, through appeal, request the entire Board to again sit in review on the picture. After such review and after hearing the arguments of the applicant or his representative and giving due consideration, the Board announces its final decision. Should the decision be unfavorable to the applicant, he still has his remedy in the courts.

Seven thousand two hundred twenty-three (7,223) reels were reviewed by the Maryland Board during the past year, with a footage of 6,047,730 feet, which, if joined together would measure more than 1,145 miles of film actually passing through our projection machines in the process of screening these films. In connection with such review work, the dialogue must be read carefully, consultations had and decisions made. A file is kept on each picture, including the application, dialogue and action taken, as well as a record of the licenses issued, together with the correspondence.

## RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

The total receipts of the Board during the past fiscal year were \$55,561.00 as compared with \$55,877.00 for the preceding year, a decrease of \$336.00. The expenditures of the Board were \$31,135.92. The net revenue to the State, after deducting the cost of operation was \$24,425.08. During the four year period (1939-1940-1941-1942) in which your present Board has been in operation, the following figures show a total increase in revenue to the State of \$6,882.00.

### Receipts

October 1, 1938 -			
September 30, 1939	\$ 50,180.00	\$ 1,521.00	Excess over 1937-1938
October 1, 1939 -			
September 30, 1940	53,180.00	3,000.00	Excess over 1938-1939
October 1, 1940 -			
September 30, 1941	55,877.00	2,697.00	Excess over 1939-1940
		\$ 7,218.00	
October 1, 1941 -			
September 30, 1942	55,561.00	336.00	Decrease from 1940-1941
		\$ 6,882.00	Total increase in receipts for four year fiscal period 1938-1942

Original films and reissues are charged for at the rate of \$2.00 per thousand feet or less, duplicate films at \$1.00 per thousand feet or less. All approvals of duplicates must be applied for by the same person within the year after the examination and approval of the original. A charge of \$1.00 is made for restoring a seal of approval on a censored film.

Attention is respectfully called to the financial statement appended to this report which shows the financial growth of this State Department and the increasing amount reverting to the State Treasury each year since 1920. In this period a total net revenue of \$255,269.40 reverted to the State Treasury.

### INTRODUCTION OF SOUNDIES (JUKE BOXES) INTO MARYLAND

On the insertion of a dime, these boxes carrying a unit of a 16 m.m. film, furnish eight individual subjects of entertainment, of three minutes each. In anticipation of these Soundies, the Maryland Motion Picture Law was amended at the last Legislature to establish a particular rate for all films, less than 35 m.m. at a censorship fee based on \$4.00 per thousand feet or fraction thereof on originals and \$2.00 per thousand feet or fraction thereof on duplicate prints. Further, in anticipation of a large volume of work by the Board incident to this particular work, as well as to make periodical inspection in motion picture theatres throughout the State, an additional inspector was authorized by the General Assembly of 1941 to care for this work.



The priorities on war material of necessity made great inroads in the manufacture and placing on the market of Soundies (juke boxes) which were introduced to the country as a new motion picture feature during the year 1940-1941. This restriction on output of machines was necessarily reflected in the receipts of the Board during the past year from this source of revenue, and the contemplated increase was not obtained.

During the fiscal year eighty-seven (87) original 16 m.m. (juke box) films were reviewed, seventeen of which were eliminated. A total of two hundred eighty-two prints (originals and duplicates) were submitted, of which two hundred forty one were approved, and forty-one (41) passed with eliminations. The number of feet were as follows:

Original	74,772
Duplicate	<u>167,518</u>
Total	242,290

Among the chief concerns of censors are crime films which must be dealt with in their various phases. Crime serials, so largely patronized by youth, run for periods of from twelve to fifteen weeks in "neighborhood" houses, and thereby focus the attention of immature minds on exploits of crime and daring. It is a question whether cycles of such films have not a detrimental and lasting effect upon the social attitudes of children. Many admirable educational films of the same length are now available in theatres frequented by youth for children's programs on Fridays and Saturdays. It is suggested by this Board that organizations interested in better motion pictures for children advocate the use of better material for such programs. Appeals have been made to this Board to deal with the excessive amounts of drinking shown in films. The chief complaint is that such scenes are generally shown in a favorable light and that the evils of drinking are rarely depicted on the screen. Again, the Board has been appealed to by those agencies interested in public safety who ask that the Board take steps to reduce scenes showing careless handling of automobiles and traffic violations. It is again noted that such incidents are treated lightly and rarely condemned. The Board believes that the grounds of complaint in both cases are not without foundation. A summary of the analysis charts which the Board makes on each feature picture shows that all of these factors in pictures that are screened are carefully checked, special attention being given to excess drinking, exploitation of crime and cruelty to animals.

#### INSPECTION STAFF

This department consists of persons who are required to visit the motion picture theatres throughout the State for the purpose of checking the requirements of the Motion Picture Law. There are over two hundred theatres in the State of Maryland. Our Inspection Department checks daily all irregularities or violations of the law and, as a result of their splendid work and constant vigilance, serious violations have been reduced.

The call of the draft has removed from our Inspection Staff two members now serving in the armed forces of our country. At this writing examinations are being prepared to replace members of the

personnel lost through war needs. Necessarily, the Board anticipates difficulty in making these replacements.

### INDUSTRY COOPERATION

The Board wishes to take this occasion to express its appreciation for the wholehearted cooperation it has received from Mr. Frank A. Hornig, President, Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Maryland, Inc., together with union officials, theatre managers, and their projectionists within the State of Maryland, and also from the New York and Washington representatives of the film industry.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES AT NEW HEADQUARTERS

The Board's transfer to new headquarters at 848 North Howard Street, in the old Lehman Hall Building, has enabled this State Department whose needs were so long neglected in the past to adequately represent the State in the work that it is called upon to perform. The Board has been complimented by members of the industry and the representatives of the theatres on their admirable set-up that they have now obtained. The Board, therefore, feels in the light of these praiseworthy remarks that the accomplishments in this particular reflect great credit on this administration.

During the fiscal year the Board has extended the use of its facilities to meet the increasing needs of both State and Federal agencies. The Public Relations Departments of the Army and Navy have made considerable use of our screening room in conjunction with their own work, and the Board's facilities have been extended to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their use and to Johns Hopkins University medical department who have found the Board's screening room of inestimable value on many occasions in order to carry out proper instruction for clinical work covering venereal diseases for both Army, Navy and civilian purposes.

It is certainly to the credit of the administration that the Board's facilities have been enlarged to serve these important war needs.

The service contract entered into by the Board with RCA Photophone Service was obtained by the Board prior to the institution of priorities, thereby enabling the Board to save \$150.00 on removal, as well as guaranteeing the Board service on parts and replacements for the coming year with option on the succeeding year.

The Board's new headquarters further provides space for screening room to be made use of, as soon as the new machine requisites by the Board are provided. The Board's desired needs date back to the institution of sound which precluded the screening of two films in one room.

Following is a statistical summary of the operations of the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors.

Respectfully submitted,

George R. Mitchell, Chairman  
Annie E. Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Marie W. Presstman, Secretary

December 31, 1942

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS  
TABLE SHOWING TOTAL ANNUAL RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS,  
TOGETHER WITH THE AMOUNTS REVERTING TO THE STATE TREASURY

October 1, 1920 - September 30, 1942

	RECEIPTS	DISBURSEMENTS	AMOUNT REVERTING TO STATE TREASURY
10-1-20 to 9-30-21	\$ 26,488.33	\$ 19,025.26	\$ 7,468.07
10-1-21 to 9-30-22	26,866.90	19,842.12	7,024.78
10-1-22 to 9-30-23	27,059.51	19,892.93	7,166.58
10-1-23 to 9-30-24	26,338.50	20,730.44	5,608.06
10-1-24 to 9-30-25	29,249.50	22,207.24	7,042.26
10-1-25 to 9-30-26	30,207.92	22,662.82	7,545.10
10-1-26 to 9-30-27	32,498.55	24,883.80	7,614.75
10-1-27 to 9-30-28	38,165.57	27,734.69	10,430.88
10-1-28 to 9-30-29	44,486.27	32,937.76	11,548.51
10-1-29 to 9-30-30	38,954.98	31,718.26	7,236.72
10-1-30 to 9-30-31	35,245.85	31,816.79	3,429.06
10-1-31 to 9-30-32	35,637.44	32,158.81	3,478.63
10-1-32 to 9-30-33	35,152.34	34,207.93	944.41
10-1-33 to 9-30-34	36,563.00	27,174.49	9,388.51
10-1-34 to 9-30-35	39,463.00	27,577.76	11,885.24
10-1-35 to 9-30-36	44,073.00	28,927.98	15,145.02
10-1-36 to 9-30-37	49,293.00	28,855.10	20,437.90
10-1-37 to 9-30-38	48,659.00	30,197.34	18,461.66
10-1-38 to 9-30-39	50,180.00	30,302.92	19,877.08
10-1-39 to 9-30-40	53,180.00	29,598.72	23,581.28
10-1-40 to 9-30-41	55,877.00	30,347.18	25,529.82
10-1-41 to 9-30-42	55,561.00	31,135.92	24,425.08
	<u>\$ 859,200.66</u>	<u>\$ 603,936.26</u>	<u>\$ 255,269.40</u>

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

OCTOBER 1, 1941 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1942

Year and Month	Original Reels	Duplicate Reels	Substitute Seals	Receipts	Total
<u>1941</u>					
October	683	3,842	149	\$ 4,821.00 149.00	\$ 4,970.00
November	617	3,921	105	4,804.00 105.00	4,909.00
December	682	3,786	127	4,892.00 127.00	5,019.00
<u>1942</u>					
January	682	3,673	121	4,756.00 121.00	4,877.00
February	540	3,941	96	4,742.00 96.00	4,838.00
March	649	3,382	111	4,471.00 111.00	4,582.00
April	558	3,554	110	4,349.00 110.00	4,459.00
May	516	3,396	137	4,220.00 137.00	4,357.00
June	565	3,633	113	4,546.00 113.00	4,659.00
July	554	3,401	142	4,383.00 142.00	4,525.00
August	579	3,034	105	4,052.00 105.00	4,157.00
September	598	3,133	99	4,110.00 99.00	4,209.00
	<u>7,223</u>	<u>42,696</u>	<u>1,415</u>		\$ 55,561.00



MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS

OCTOBER 1, 1941 - - SEPTEMBER 30, 1942

	Dramas Original and Duplicate	Comedies Original and Duplicate	News Original and Duplicate	Cartoons Original and Duplicate	Advertising Original and Duplicate	Miscella- neous Orig- inal and Duplicate
October	379	305	628	47	8	1
November	394	261	634	79	10	5
December	402	246	565	57	9	1
January	362	303	705	83	5	3
February	398	275	561	92	6	4
March	351	290	559	72	1	8
April	365	239	639	75	5	2
May	323	273	602	89	4	3
June	347	257	731	112	5	14
July	340	194	728	85	5	10
August	288	275	733	86	3	14
September	300	282	648	84	5	11
	4,249	3,200	7,733	961	66	76

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Films, Original	2,209			
Films, Duplicate	14,076			
Reels, Original	7,223			
Reels, Duplicate	42,696			
Number of Feet, Original	6,047,730			
Number of Feet, Duplicate	36,129,108			
Films Approved	16,062			
Films Rejected	6			
Films Eliminated	217			
	16,285	49,919	42,176,838	16,285

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS  
For the Year ended September 30, 1942

FEES:

Original Reels . . . 35 m. m. (5,955,411 feet) . . .	\$ 13,368.00	
(Including 25 Trailers . . 5,957 feet - \$ 50.00)		
" Reels . . 16 m. m. (17,547 feet) . . . . .	136.00	
" " , Reversible, 16 m . m. (74,772 feet) . .	348.00	\$ 13,852.00
Duplicate Reels 35 m. m. (35,959,649 feet) . . . .	39,900.00	
" " 16 m. m. ( 1,941 " . . . .	6.00	
" " 16 m. m. Reversible ('167,518 feet)	390.00	40,294.00
Sale of Substitute Seals (1,415) . . . . .		<del>1,415.00</del>
		\$ 55,561.00
Deposited to Credit of State Treasurer . . . . .		\$ 55,561.00

EXPENSES

Salaries:

Board Members . . . . .	\$ 7,200.00
Other Employees . . . . .	18,181.94
	\$ 25,381.94

Other Expenses:

General Repairs . . . . .	96.49
Light, Heat, Power and Water	265.82
Traveling . . . . .	666.55
Communication . . . . .	691.76
Contractual, (Seals, Elec. Wiring) . . . .	2,462.03
Office Supplies . . . . .	592.70
Motion Picture Supplies . . . . .	103.43
Office Equipment . . . . .	168.15
Motion Picture Equipment . . . . .	673.55
Insurance . . . . .	32.50
	\$ 5,753.98

\$ 31,135.92

BUDGET ACCOUNT (Per Comptroller)

Appropriation . . . . .	\$ 31,919.00	
Refund (Sale of Seals, Item 208 . . . . .	7.62	
" (Sale of old Motors, Item 509 . . . . .	5.00	
	\$ 31,931.62	
Less Reversion to Reserve Fund . . . . .	795.70	\$ 31,135.92
General Fund Disbursement . . . . .		\$ 31,135.92

# SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS CHARTS

OCTOBER 1, 1941 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1942

	Social Drama	Comedy Drama	Musical Drama	Melo Drama	Mystery Drama	Western and Action	Crime and Horror	Documentary
October	15	17	5	0	4	8	3	1
November	16	15	2	1	7	13	0	0
December	16	10	5	1	3	13	2	0
January	25	10	3	0	5	14	1	1
February	17	11	0	0	3	10	3	0
March	21	13	1	0	6	10	1	0
April	15	14	1	0	6	7	0	0
May	17	11	1	1	2	5	2	1
June	11	11	0	2	1	10	1	2
July	17	6	3	6	2	8	0	2
August	21	8	4	0	3	4	1	0
September	14	8	3	5	4	14	1	0
205	134	28	16	46	116	15	7	

Total number of films analysed -